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1910





PLAYING HAPPY

AND OTHER POEMS

BY
GEORGE FRANCIS CRARY
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LIFT up my soul, thou strength of life, until my spirit touches thine, where dwells the fire that gives both life and light, and with the dawn, O Lord of Light, may I so work that my whole life shall blend with thine, and all the universe may know my spark was kindled at thy forge and so will never fade away as does the rose-grey glow with each departing day.

INEZ DUTRO GEORGE.

PLAYING HAPPY

J Played at being happy yester e'en,
With candles lit and joss sticks as of old,
I piled to hand the books we love the best,
The two old glasses filled with wine—to yours
I touched my lips to mark where you should drink—
Then read aloud, those well marked passages,
That served as messages from heart to heart,
And coaxed our new born love to consciousness.

I fear I'm over old for make-believe,
The smoke but filled the dimly lighted room,
With spectres of an uncongenial mien,
Both wine and books had lost their potency.
Your presence like a leaven gave the life—
Without it, incense, candles, books and wine,
But drear reminders of the might-have-been.
My playing wasn't happy yester e'en.

I'll not play being happy any more,
But try to live the moments as they come,
If sweet the past, 'twas *living* made it so.
If then instead of playing I but *live*,
I'll find each moment filled with happiness.
I might have saved myself some doleful hours,
Had I remembered love's unceasing flow
And *lived* instead of playing yester e'en.

SONG

CAN there be song in heaven? Then heaven's no
more

Than this life on perhaps some higher plane.
It cannot be a place of perfect joy,
Where all desire is satisfied at last,
Or why the song?

For song's the voice of longing, 'tis the cry
Wrung from the heart by pain of great desire—
The hopeful mate-call, or the moan of loss,
The mate once found, there comes a silence then
More sweet than song.

LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP

WE labor best 'neath your ardent rays,
Source of our energy, radiant star,
Roused by the touch of your quickening fire,
Labors of Hercules daunt us not,
O Glorious Sun!

But spent with labor and torn by care
We rest in your soft reflected light,
Our wounds are healed and our strength renewed
By the soothing touch of your mellowed rays,
O Quiet Moon!

After the strife of the heat of day,
After the quest of a vain pursuit,
As the darkness falls, we turn to you
For a quiet hour, for a restful hour,
O Faithful Friend!

OUR CURFEW

FACH night when comes the hour of nine,
Where e'er it chance to find me,
I bow my head in silent prayer
For you—dear one.

Once evening found us side by side
In ever sweet communion,
And now when comes that hour again
Of you—I think.

Our paths have lead divergently,
It seems I've almost lost you—
Until each night at nine o'clock
You're mine—again.

Night often finds me burdened sore,
And bitterness would claim me,
Did not your presence make that hour
So sweet—to me.

JOY

WHEN at the cost of agonizing tears
The heart's desire is realized at last,
When joy is purchased like mere merchandise
Or great renunciation ends in gain,
Can we find pleasure in possession then?

Nay, joy that's joy must come spontaneous, free,
The jasmine's far flung scent, the wild bird's song,
Ambitious dawn or restful twilight glow,
As these come so must joy; or else in vain.

DOUBT

(1) Friend! How have I sought within thy soul
For that illusive complement I lack!

At times I seem to see my Great Desire
With hands outstretched to meet my eager grasp,
Or coyly coaxing like a child at play,
Then, as my dearest wish seems realized,
Dark night and baffling silence intervene.

Does she in truth abide within thy soul,
This fair entrancing Vision of Delight?
Is yours the sheltering depth where she may dwell,
Or but deceptive shallows that reflect,
As in a glass, the vision of my dreams?

DANTE TO BEATRICE

HOW futile metes and bounds to stay the heart!
I in my narrow cell of duty held,
You hedged about by ever watchful eyes,
May laugh to scorn precaution's useless care.
No circumstance, no custom, creed or law
Can bar the passage of my out-flung song,
Nor still the answering quiver of your heart.

The outward seeming calm indifference
Turns not the deeper vision of my soul.
Despite it all I look within and see
What other eyes than mine have never known—
Your inner life's entranceing loveliness.
'Tis mine by right of conquest. Shall I yield
Possession of my great discovery?

Once love like mine had prompted valiant deeds
In tournament or battle's bloody strife;
I may not place my trust in sinewed strength,
Or seek to circumvent by cunning wiles.
My song my only hope, and this I match
'Gainst all the world, or friend or foe, to win
An entrance to this heart of hearts I know.

THE LOST MATE

SING little bird, pour out the liquid notes!
Sing on and on and help make glad the world!
They think your wondrous song is born of joy,
Nor seem to know you're calling to your mate—
Forever vainly calling to a mate,
Whose answering note can never reach your ear.

And may I also gladden this old world
With joyous song, while I in truth like you
Forever vainly call an absent love.
I know 'tis but an echo that returns,
Yet hope assures me all this outpoured song
Will bring some sweet reward to you and me.

AT DAWN

THIS day when Death and Failure, Want and Woe,
Seem hedging me about on every side,
I know to be the day of days to me,
The day I'll count as my true natal day.

The world says Death came stalking in the door—
It saw but somber robes and bony hands.
I saw an angel clothed in heavenly light,
Who said, "My name is Everlasting Life."

The world says Failure swept my meager store,
That my great need has fallen on ill times.
I know "Man doth not live by bread alone,"
And only now has plenty come to me.

The world says grievous Care has bound my hands,
That lonesomeness and drudgery are mine.
I know that Joy and Freedom fill my heart.
As comes the dawn to my new-opened eyes.

TIME AND PLACE

HEREIN, O Time and Place! I now declare
My independence of your rule!—I who
For long to your twin despotism bowed.
How oft I coveted your seeming wealth
And felt some great achievement would be mine
Could I but seek that genial atmosphere
Where ample leisure waits the ready hand.
As if to punish this presumptuous thought,
You filled my every hour with menial tasks
And bound me to a narrow dreary round;
You razed my fondest castles to the ground
With clamorous din that seemed the wreck of worlds.
Then in the after hush I heard a voice
And understood some little of the words—

“Heir of the Infinite! Eternity
Is yours! Time cannot circumscribe your work—
’Tis no more than a swinging pendulum,
And Place—mere term by which we designate
Position relative to other things,
And what have you, the Soul, to do with things?
These not the implements with which you work.
What if these hands of yours are more than filled,
Your feet restricted to a beaten path—
Are you then nothing more than hands and feet,
A mere machine and regulating brain?
Let hands and feet and brain co-operate
To work for all these things material,
But *you*, the individual consciousness,
That holds unbroken through material change,
Can you not smile at all their puerile strife,
And labor midst it all, calm and serene?”

And this has proved a magic talisman
To free me from your rule, O Time and Place!
And now the more your lashes hiss about,
The more, in proof of their futility,
Come forth the greater labors of the soul.
In vain all this tumultuous turbulence
That seems to implicate my every act.
You see me ever busied, nor can know
The excellence of that cool inner room
Where now I find that haven I sought without.

'TWAS YOU

'**T**WAS you who raised again my sinking hands,
And turned the tide of battle, when before
The day seemed lost, the host of enemies
Unconquerable. My glance accompanying
The uplifted hands beheld, massed on my side,
The calm sure legions of Omnipotence.

And now I find you sore besieged and haste
To turn my strengthened arm to your support,
Eager to fight, though I must be content
To point the truth, for there before your eyes,
Where seems the unimpeded enemy,
Stands even now your all-sufficient help.

TWILIGHT

YOU know the mountain twilight—how the sun,
Down dropped beyond the snow range, leaves behind
A landscape touched by magic mistiness,
Which liberates the spirit from the form,
Till gorge and canyon, wooded slope and peak,
Become a variant host, wherein your thought
Finds, *as you will*, a doleful company,
Or joyful comradeship.

Love wings its course from out the hopeful east,
Till hid at last by Fate's relentless range,
Naught but a lingering twilight stays the night.
But in this mellowing glow there stands revealed
A spirit throng that may at first present
A fearful mein, but closer seen will prove
Angelic heralds come to turn your thought
Back to the east again.

I WONDER

J Wonder—could we love without the pain,
Without the strife and effort to attain?

If there were no separation
Would we miss the consolation
When our loss is swallowed up again in gain?

Does rending of the heart strings make us grow,
Or good—because the tearing pains us so?
And does all this laceration
Find an ample compensation
In the little bit of happiness we know?

Our tendency is toward a higher state
Where ultimate perfection seems to wait,
But until that dispensation
Abrogates all computation
Can we ever count the cost of love *too great?*

APPRECIATION

THE song that touched your heart—know you it came
From out the dark cold depths of solitude,
As springs the lily from the noisome slime?
For song or flower to reach the light of day,
Know you the cost?

But see! Your smile, your tear dimmed eyes, your voice—
Expressive of your heart's responsiveness,
Have cleared my consciousness of aught but joy,
If there was any cost to compensate,
'Tis all forgot.

Let me be conscious of unvarying love,
As constant as the sun—though night or cloud
May sometimes seem to say it is no more—
Then like the lillies will the songs unfold
All joyfully.

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